

EARLY DAYS IN WELLESLEY

AND A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

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When we lived in Wellesley 1924-1933, we knew Mr. and Mrs. Bradford and I have been entertained in their home on the Worcester turnpike in Wellesley Hills.

1904—1929

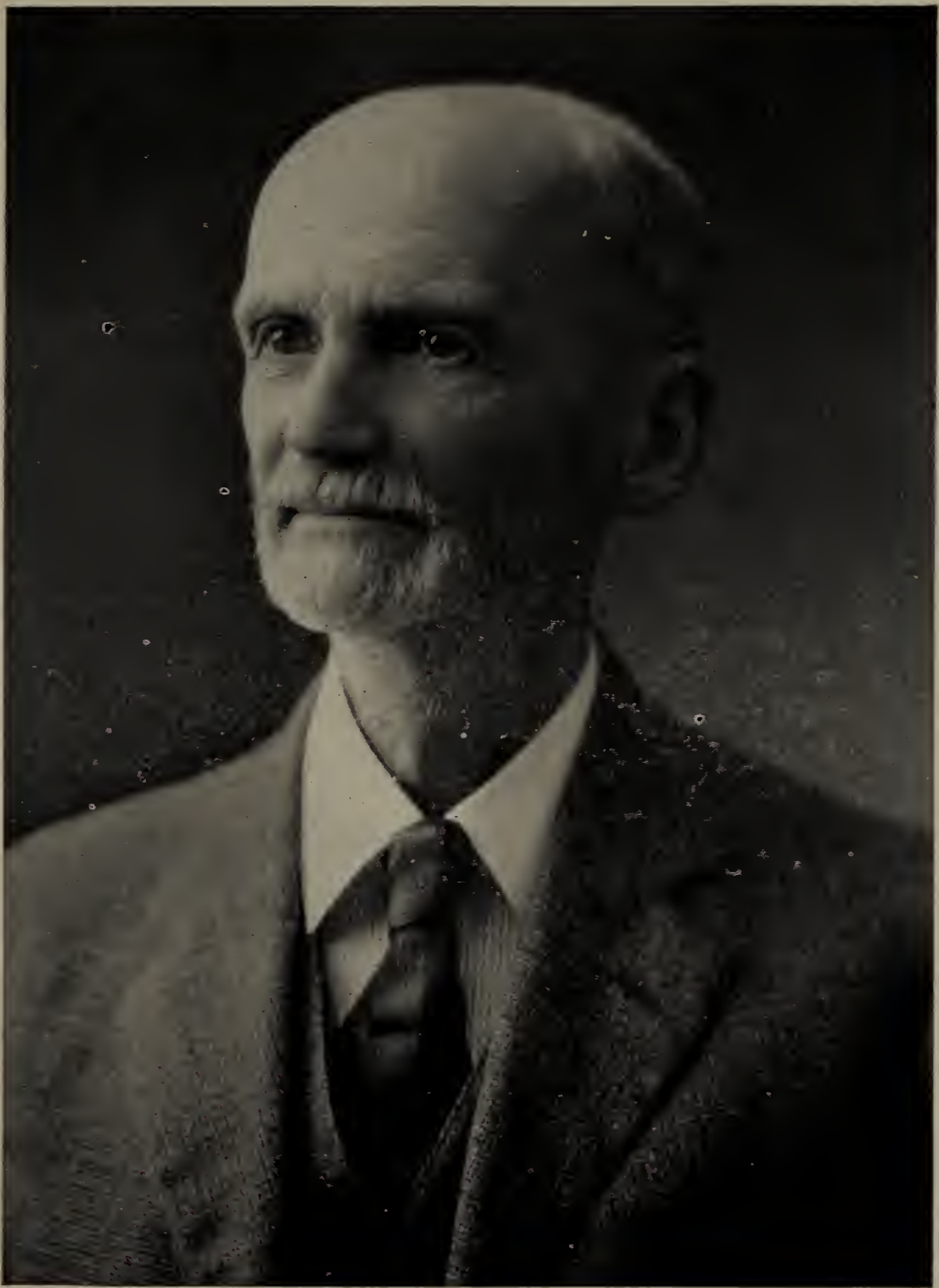
HE Wellesley National Bank commenced business on June 10, 1904, and for a quarter of a century has been privileged to serve the residents of Wellesley and vicinity.

As a part of the observance of our twenty-fifth anniversary, we are publishing a special edition of *EARLY DAYS IN WELLESLEY*, by our distinguished fellow-townsmen, Gamaliel Bradford.

This book is presented with the compliments of the Officers and Directors of the Wellesley National Bank, in the belief that these recollections of Wellesley in its early days will prove of interest to the residents of Wellesley of the present day.

June 10, 1929.

The Wellesley Press, Inc.
Wellesley, Mass.
1929



Gamaliel Bradford

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Prof. Bradford

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PREFATORY NOTE

Early in 1928 the editor of the *Townsmen*, Mr. George W. Adams, suggested to me that I should write out some of my recollections of the early days of Wellesley, and I accordingly gathered various memories into a series of articles, which the *Townsmen* printed during May and June. Such random gropings in the dark backward and abysm of time are always more interesting to the writer than to any one else, but the officers of the Wellesley Historical Society, feeling that the little papers might have some importance for younger and more recent residents than myself, and perhaps some value as record for future investigators, decided to print them in a small pamphlet. This was made possible by the courtesy of the Wellesley Press, Inc., in allowing the use of the original type and material for illustrative purposes and the Historical Society is much indebted to it and to the *Townsmen* for this assistance.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD.

December 7, 1928.

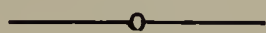
By arrangement with the Wellesley Historical Society and Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, this anniversary edition has been published by the Wellesley National Bank. It differs from the original in the addition of several new illustrations.

June 10, 1929.

EARLY DAYS IN WELLESLEY



Being Casual Recollections
of Boyhood and Later
Years—1867 to 1881



BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD

Published by
The Wellesley National Bank
Wellesley, Massachusetts
1929

Early Days In Wellesley

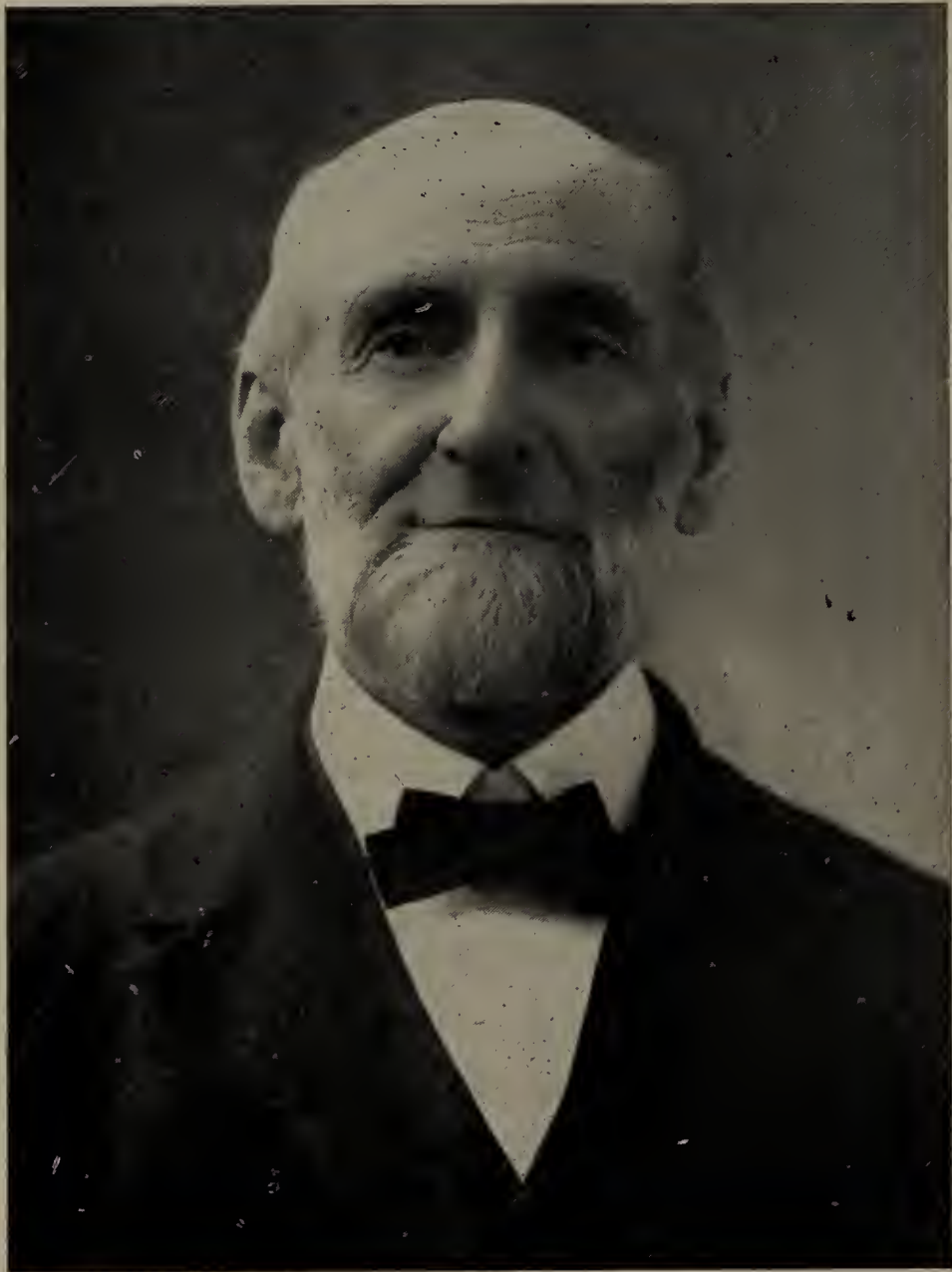
I first came to Wellesley to live in the spring of 1867 and I know nothing of the earlier history of the Town except what is afforded by Miss Fiske's excellent record.

In 1867 Wellesley Hills was the village of Grantville and was a portion of West Needham. It had a high reputation for salubrity, especially as regards consumption, and many of the early residents settled here on that account. My mother's numerous family had all died of the disease and my father was anxious to find a place where his children might escape it. He saw the house advertised in the *Transcript* one night, went out to look at it the next day, and bought it the day following. It was a small, plain country farm-house, with no modern conveniences of any kind, even for that day, but as we expected to occupy it during the summer only, we made no alterations till later.

I remember distinctly being brought out by my grandmother, early on a May morning, losing our way from the station to the house, and climbing up the steep railroad bank behind what is now Mr. Clapp's house, in terror of an approaching train.

Grantville was then the simplest kind of rural neighborhood. There was no water system. There were no sidewalks. In the winter you followed the snow-plough path in the middle of the street, but as the traffic was not noticeable, you could do this without imminent danger or the assistance of a traffic officer. There was no public lighting. In the early days there were even no street-lights, though very soon there began to be dim

and remote kerosene lamps, which the lamplighter painstakingly illuminated one by one, and which enabled the belated traveler to pick a wandering way through the grass-grown paths and puddly streets. The Boston and



GAMALIEL BRADFORD, SR.

Albany railroad gave excellent train service, as now, but the trains were much fewer, none express, the trip regularly required three-quarters of an hour, and the braking of the cars by hand, bringing the trains to a

stop with a slow grinding effort, is a curious reminder of the progress that has been made in all mechanical directions.

The mention of the railroad brings to mind the first of the shadowy group of figures that hover more or less distinctly about the threshold of childish memory, that of the station-master, Mr. Fuller. Mr. Fuller was, or



GRANTVILLE STATION

This view was taken just before the station was moved to its present location, second house beyond the corner of Washington and Forest Streets on the east side of Washington Street. The sign formerly read Grantville.

appears to me, a very worthy, very curious, and very deliberate old gentleman. He not only dispensed the railroad tickets, but was the sole and most important representative of the United States Government in the matter of mails, and his method of fulfilling this function would, I fear, seem to our present most competent agent, Mr. Donlan, rather irresponsible, or even scan-

dalous. Mr. Fuller's post office was largely in his old buggy, not to say in his pocket, or even in his head. He was reputed to read all the postal cards and if he met you in the street, he would say, "I've got a card in the office for you: Sarah Jane's coming home next Monday." He had the habit of carrying the mail about with him, partly for distribution and perhaps for perusal. If he saw you turning a distant corner, he would hail you: "Here ! I've got something for you." Then he would stop his old horse, get out his spectacles, proceed to look over the package of letters, and finally produce—or not—something you should have had days before. The tradition was that a lady who hired his buggy for an excursion discovered a letter addressed to her hidden in the lining.

Mr. Fuller soon disappeared, and the management of the mails later came under the business-like administration of Miss Mary Austin in a separate building. Mr. Fuller was succeeded as ticket-agent by the competent and courteous Mr. T. W. Travis, who will always be remembered by those who remember those days at all as not only efficient in his work but a delightful actor and singer with the Grantville Dramatic Club.

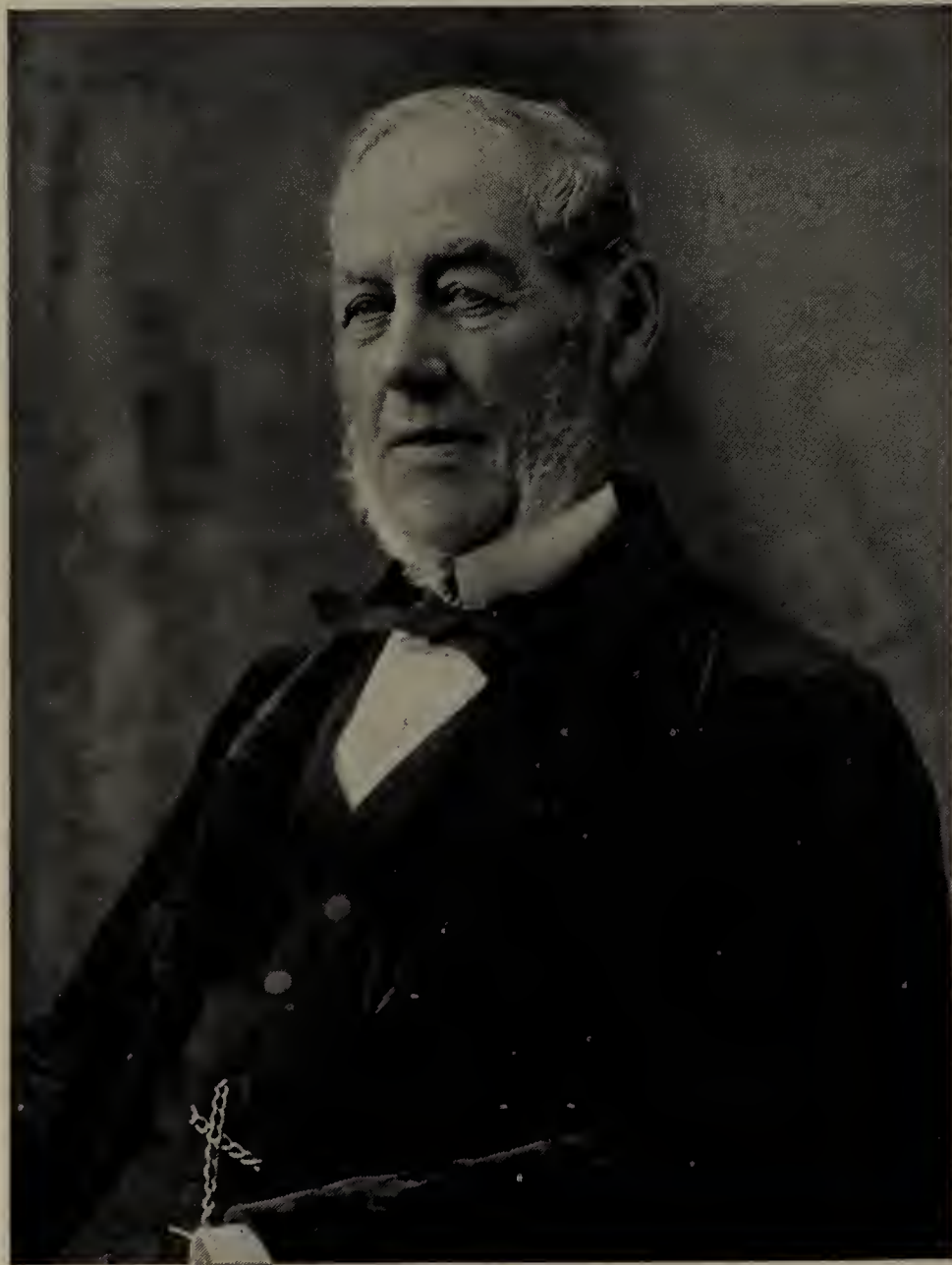
Before leaving the railroad station, which at that time, when there were no clubs, might be regarded as the heart of the town, I must advert to one very piquant and characteristic figure, that of Mr. Charles Kingsbury. Mr. Kingsbury was a typical New England farmer, of the old-fashioned type, and his house and farm may still be seen on Linden Street much as he left them. He lived a bachelor life with his sister, Miss Charlotte, who was quite as singular and interesting as himself. He was a great haunter of the station and loved to sit with a bevy of cronies and discuss all the affairs of the community, great and small. If their talk had been recorded by dictagraph, it would probably be astonishing and amusing, a sort of anticipation of the personal columns of

the *Townsmen*, less decorous and exact than the pages of that estimable sheet, but with a breeziness and spiciness which do not often get into print.

As memory creeps and gropes in that dim and shadowy past, a troop of vague personages gather about me. It is true that there are limits to even my aged recollection. I was wandering one day over Maugus Hill, when I met a mechanic who was engaged in the construction of a house. I chatted with him for a moment, and remarked that I used to roam over the Hill when I was a boy and there were no houses to be seen anywhere. "Oh," he said, "I suppose that would be in the days of Chief Maugus." And one of my little neighbors once explained to a friend: "Mr. Bradford is very old: you know, he was one of the Pilgrims." I do not quite remember the Pilgrims, and even Chief Maugus is as much of a tradition to me as to the youngest of my neighbors, but my childhood memories do retain many figures who are almost as much of a tradition to others as Maugus or the Pilgrims. Of course I was too young to know these men personally, but they were prominent in affairs, their faces were familiar in public gatherings and in the streets, and their actions were the constant subject of friendly or critical comment.

At the western end of the Town, in Wellesley Village, the chief personage was naturally Mr. H. H. Hunnewell, the giver of the Town Hall and Library, with its delightful park, of the Hunnewell Playground, and of many other useful and admirable acquisitions. In the late sixties and early seventies Mr. Hunnewell had already accumulated his large fortune in railroads and other financial interests, and was able to give himself to his charming hobby of improving his beautiful estate on the shores of Lake Waban opposite Wellesley College. Before the days of the devastating automobile, it was possible to be generous with one's grounds and private

premises, and Mr. Hunnewell was more than liberal in encouraging the public to roam through his gardens and stroll over his lawns and wander in his shady alleys, till wanton carelessness and abuse made more thorough

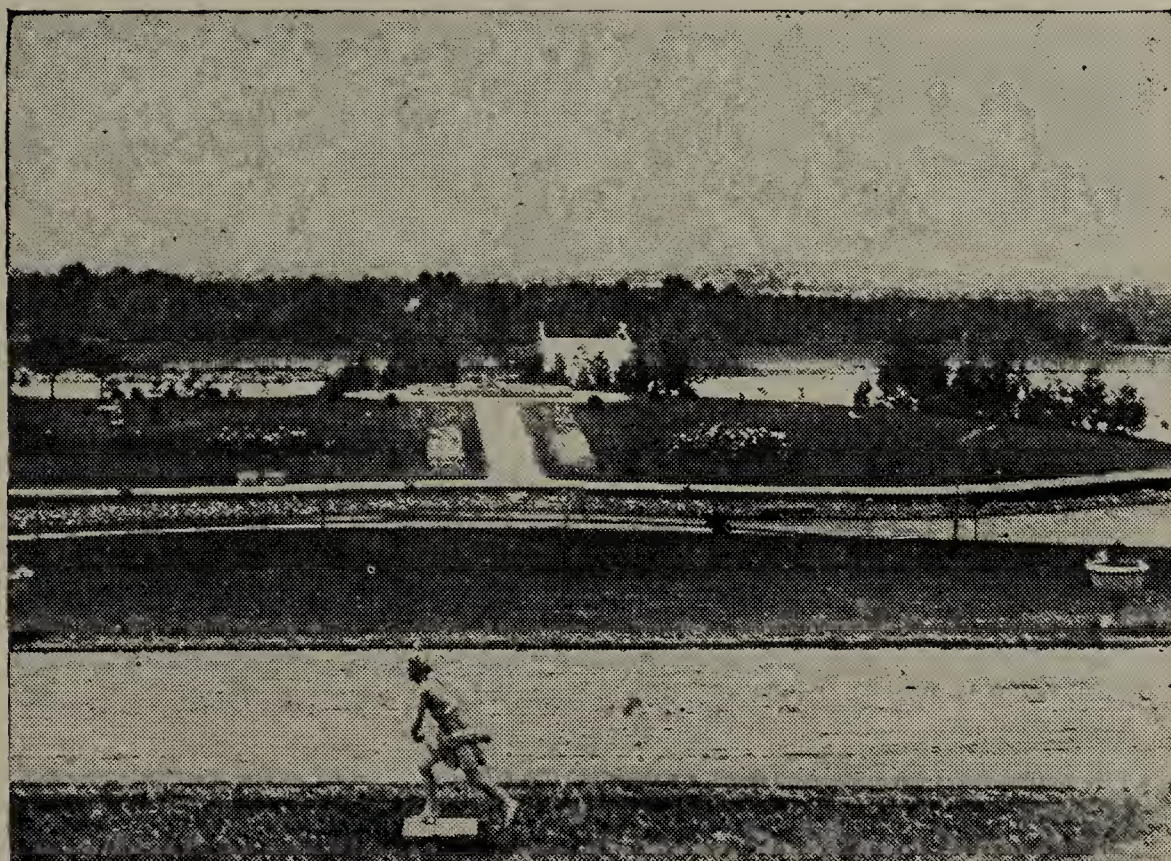


HORATIO H. HUNNEWELL

restriction inevitable. But even today his place, as seen merely from the waters of Lake Waban, is one of the greatest attractions of the Town. Mr. H. F. Durant, Mr. Hunnewell's next door neighbor, was also wealthy, philanthropic, and interested in public affairs, but he



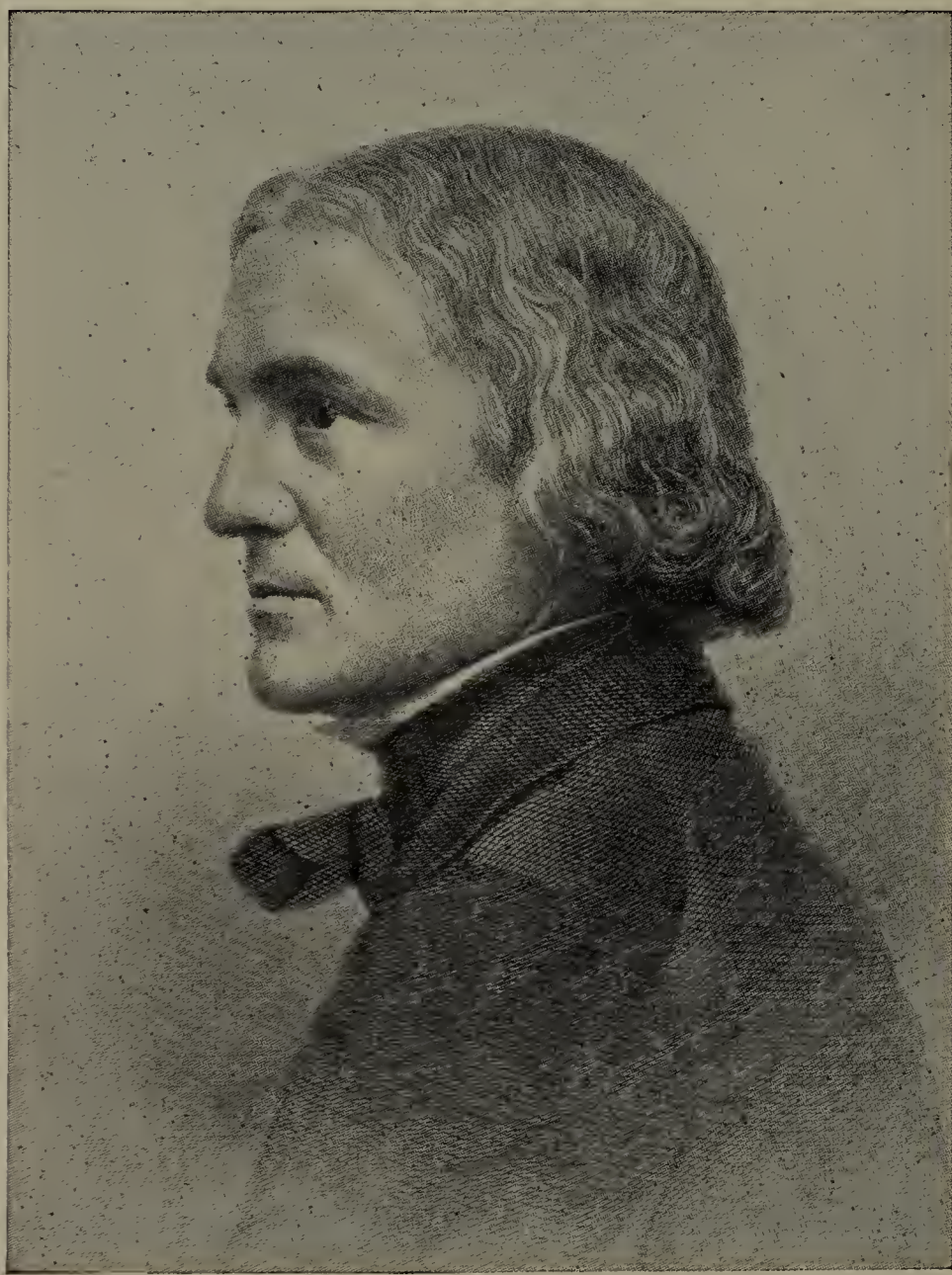
VIEW OF FAMOUS HUNNEWELL GARDENS



BAKER GARDENS FROM GROVE STREET

will be more properly portrayed at length in connection with Wellesley College.

In another section, quite remote from Mr. Hunnewell, and on the borders of Needham, Mr. Baker, of the Grover and Baker Sewing Machine Company, established



HENRY F. DURANT

his residence, where the Alden house and Brownleigh Hall stood later, and made a great place as remarkable for oddity and picturesqueness as Mr. Hunnewell's was for pure beauty. Mr. Baker liked to amuse and astonish

his neighbors, young and old. He created a sort of anticipation of the modern amusement-park, with a mysterious grotto full of thrills and surprises, spectral shapes that would dart out at you from dim corners, sudden fountains that would shower you with perfume when you stepped on hidden trap-doors, stuffed animals that terrified you and live animals that made you laugh. When our elders were taken to admire the Hunnewell



ALDEN HOUSE, ON THE SITE OF BAKER MANSION

place, we children clamored for the diversions and surprises of “Baker’s.” A good illustration of the oddity of Mr. Baker’s methods is the story that, when he had completed the digging of his artificial lake, he one day went through the train on his way out from Boston, distributing to all the passengers slips of white paper and asking everybody to write a name for the newly

created sheet of water. I do not remember the result, but I know that my father on the spur of the moment suggested "Lake Slopover."

Another notable figure in the early days of Wellesley proper was Mr. Solomon Flagg, for many years the town clerk. I remember Mr. Flagg as a tall, gaunt, solemn, dignified individual, capable also of being gra-

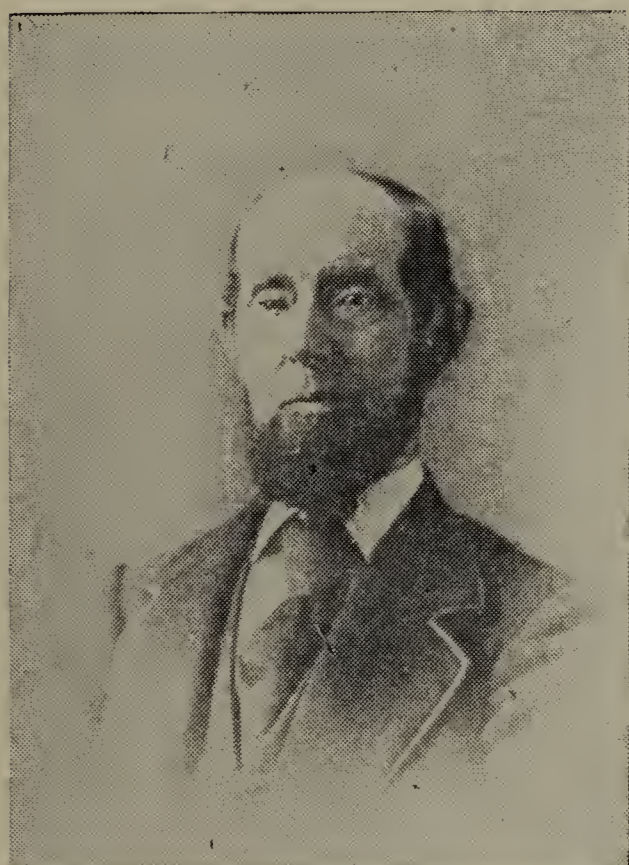


RHODODENDRONS IN HUNNEWELL PARK ADJACENT TO WELLESLEY TOWN HALL, THE GIFT OF HORATIO H. HUNNEWELL

cious and kindly, and very sensible of the importance of the many duties he had to perform. At any rate he performed them for a long time as did his successor in office, Mr. Kingsbury. Let us hope that the present incumbent, Mr. Ryan, so attentive and efficient, will much surpass the record of either of them.

At the Grantville end of the town there were perhaps no persons so conspicuous in the outside world, certainly none so wealthy, as Mr. Hunnewell; but there were many

who came much closer to my childhood interests. The most generally distinguished was undoubtedly Judge Josiah G. Abbott, whose fine estate on Linden Street is still in the hands of his descendants. Judge Abbott may or may not have been jovial, easy, and familiar in the bosom of his family. The impression he gave to those who watched him from afar in his stately carriage or



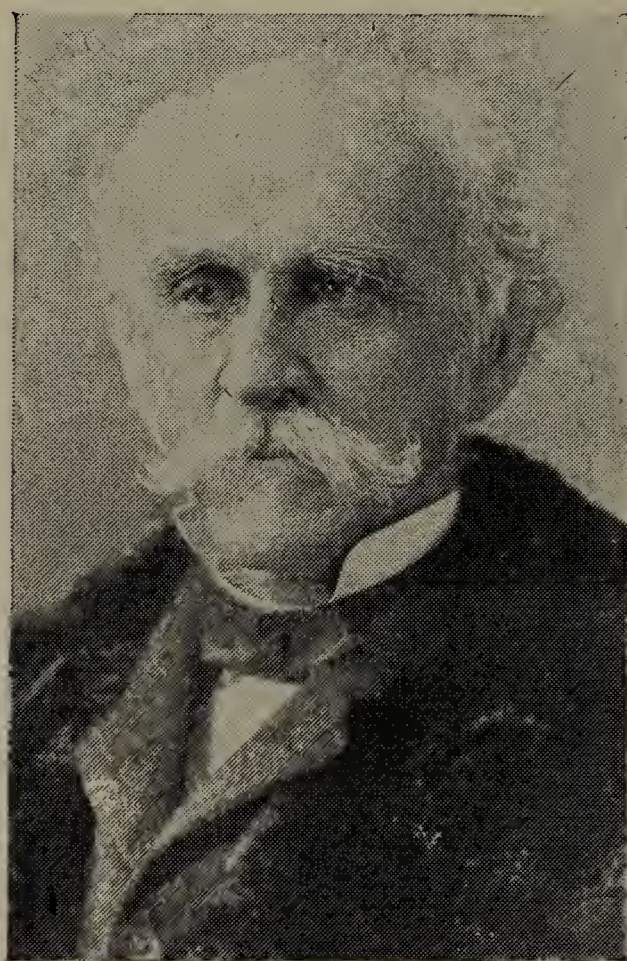
SOLOMON FLAGG

promenading the station platform was one of extreme official dignity. He fairly reeked with dignity. And the awestruck childish mind was overcome with a deep shudder at the thought of being judged by a judge like that. Of Judge Abbott's numerous sons the best known in the town was Mr. Fletcher Abbott, long and deservedly popular as a most efficient tree-warden. It would be hard to say whether Mr. Abbott is more remembered for

the picturesqueness of his language or the kindness of his heart. One mildly characteristic specimen will serve to show his vivid and telling way of putting things. A friend once asked him how he liked living in the country. He answered, "Country? Do you call this country? This isn't country any more, it's only a damned suburb." Those who recall the Grantville of fifty years ago will appreciate what Mr. Abbott meant.

A noteworthy personality of the early Grantville days,

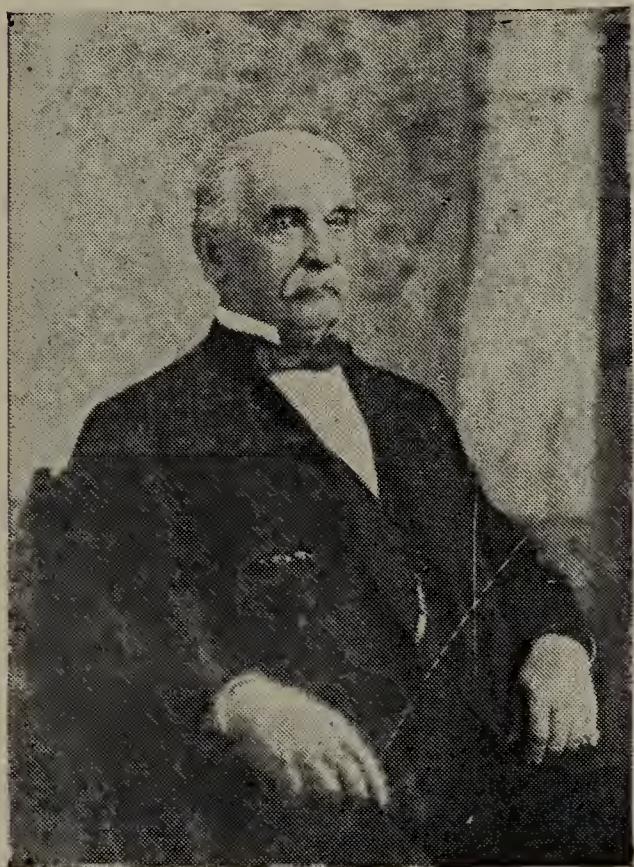
perhaps less generally known than Judge Abbott but more familiar to his fellow citizens, was Mr. John W. Shaw. Mr. Shaw was quite well to do, and was always actively interested in anything that tended to promote the welfare of the community. He was prominent in developing the region now bounded by Laurel Avenue and he built many of the houses on that street. He is of special interest just at present, as he gave the clock and bell to the Shaw School, which was named after him, and these are now about to be set up in the stone tower to be erected in Elm Park in Wellesley Hills Square. Mr. Shaw was very impressive in appearance, solidly built, dignified in his movements, with white hair and moustache and very ruddy features. I am afraid we young people all called him Uncle John behind his back but we should hardly have dared to do so to his face. I do not know what may have gone on beneath the surface, but to my childish recollection he seems a substantial, complete, untroubled man, whom the ghastly unexpectedness of life, so disconcerting to some of us, could not jolt for a moment out of his accustomed way.



JUDGE JOSIAH G. ABBOTT

Another conspicuous figure, who by his extraordinarily prolonged activity comes down into the memory of

many today, was Mr. Flavius Josephus Lake. Mr. Lake was Chairman of the Board of Assessors for many years and probably knew more about Wellesley real estate than any one else ever has known or ever will know. In later life he was perhaps somewhat obstinate and was not unskilled in using his deafness in support of his obstinacy. But early and late he had a generous and kindly



"UNCLE JOHN" W. SHAW

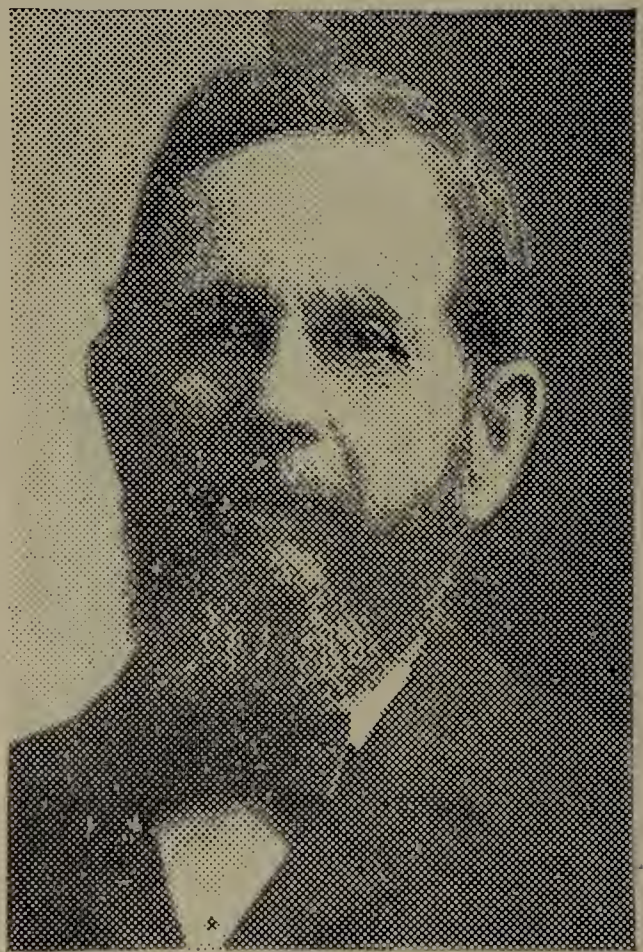
disposition and, as I remember him of old, when he had ample means, he was a liberal giver, always anxious to forward any good cause that came in his way. I fear, however, that my most vivid recollection in regard to him is that he was the last human to call me "Gammie" long after I was fifty years old. Which reminds me of a young cousin of mine, who came out to see me when I returned to Wellesley, after an absence of a number of

years. The cousin was a little uncertain as to where I lived and inquired of the cab-driver at the station. The cab-driver looked perplexed for a moment: "Mr. Bradford?" Then his face cleared and he explained: "Oh, you mean Gammie. Yes, I know where he lives." Alas, as Charles Lamb murmured forlornly in his old age, "There is no one left to call me Charley now."

In the troop of shadows who crowd into my fancy there are many who deserve mention for their oddity

or their charm, many doubtless quite worthy of mention whom I shall pass over. Judge George White and Mr. Charles T. Wilder did not take any very active part in public affairs. They were both reserved and modest, exceedingly occupied with their own most important concerns. But Wellesley has rarely produced two men of higher character or greater ability. The two Deacon Wares were I suppose very different from each other. They are twinned in my memory as venerable examples of a sincere piety and a simple and honorable life. Mr. Noah Perrin, for whom the Methodist Church at the Falls was named, was a fine specimen of the stern New England type, sturdy in thrift, vigorous in effort, uncompromising in principle, believing that the world would be damned or saved according as it chose to accept the salvation that was offered it through Christ.

Mr. Freeman Phillips was, like Mr. Perrin, of a handsome and imposing presence, though their aspects were very different. Also Mr. Phillips was a reserved and quiet person, very decided in his opinions, but never in the least inclined to impose them upon others. He was well known as a builder of scrupulous thoroughness and artistic finish. He was further a most valuable citizen, reluctant to give his judg-



FREEMAN PHILLIPS

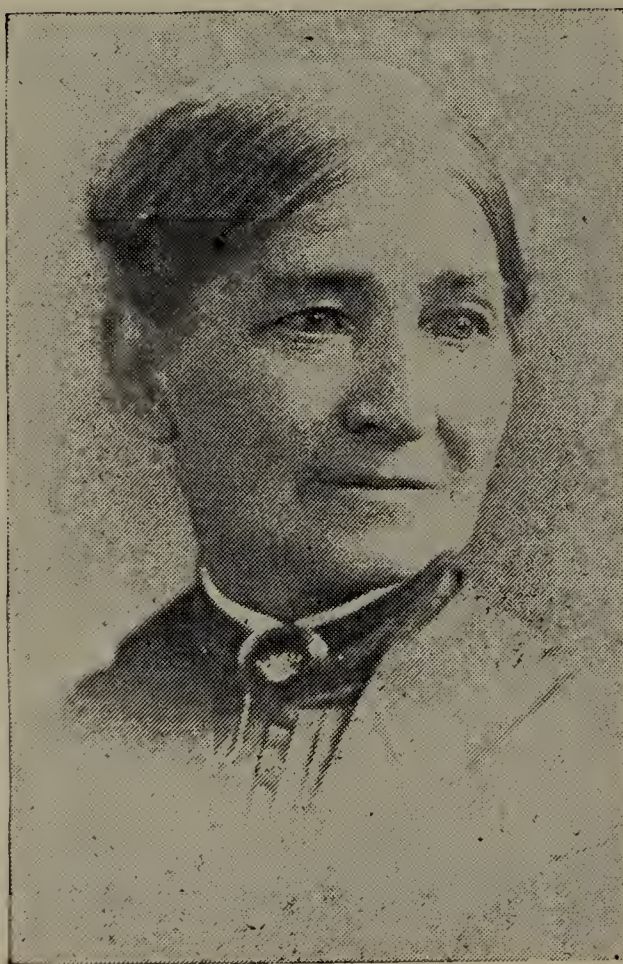
ments, but discreet and far-sighted, so that when they were given it was not wise to neglect them.

None of the Grantville worthies hitherto noted were especially distinguished for gayety. Mr. Charles Dillaway was a most active and capable man of business, but he will be chiefly remembered for the atmosphere of high spirits which he scattered about everywhere. He had an inexhaustible supply of stories and delighted to tell them. They were perhaps not always very witty, or very original, and they were frequently repeated, but they were delivered with such a fund of good humor, the teller enjoyed them so hugely, and put so much of his rollicking entertainment into the telling, that you left him more contented with your self and with the world. An average specimen might be Mr. Dillaway's description of his dog as half hunter and half setter, because he spent half his time hunting for a bone and other half setting around gnawing it. But the story is nothing without the chuckle and the laugh and the expansive merriment that went with it.

Another figure that we do not forget was Mr. Sylvester McIntosh, founder of the express and moving business which was carried on by his son, Mr. Charles McIntosh, up to very recent years. Mr. McIntosh was a burly, energetic, decided personage, who told you just what he thought in concise and picturesque language. He was the prime mover of the community and no one thought of transferring household goods except under his supervision. But he also took a considerable part in public affairs. One piquant little anecdote clings in my memory, though it hardly does justice to his serious usefulness. For a time Mr. McIntosh acted as constable, as that was long before the days of a regular police force. The Selectmen, for some reason, decided that the coasting on the hill in front of my house was dangerous and must

be stopped and Mr. McIntosh was deputed to stop it. He took the direct but one would think not the very judicious method. He planted himself right in the middle of the hill in the full track of an unusually large double-runner, which was well started on its rapid descent. You might just as well plant yourself in front of a flying automobile. The double-runner struck him squarely, threw him high in the air, passed completely under him and he was deposited in a snow-bank, with his dignity considerably impaired, but not much damaged otherwise.

It seems only just to mention some of the prominent Grantville ladies with this varied list of men. Naturally the women did not play quite so conspicuous a part in public affairs or public comment, but many of them were well deserving of being remembered for their interest or their charm. Perhaps the most widely known outside of Wellesley limits was Miss

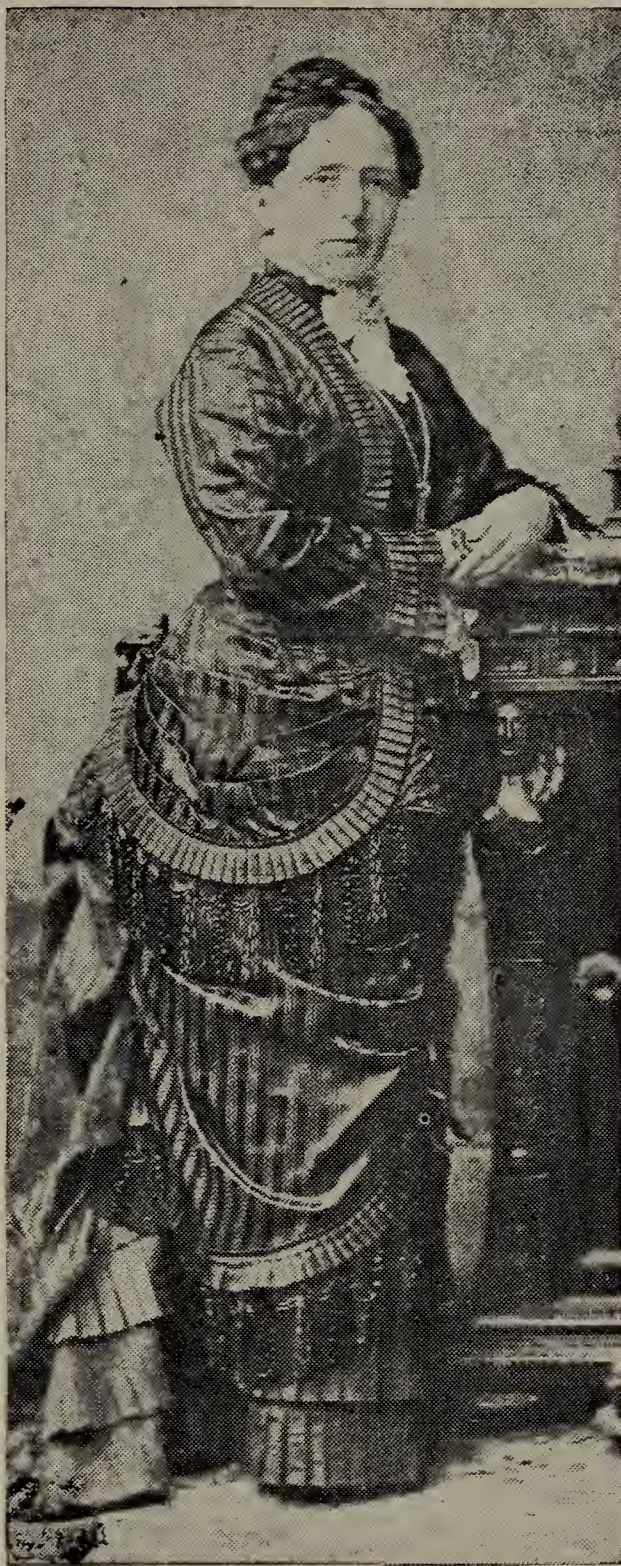


MISS SARAH SOUTHWICK

Sarah Southwick. Miss Southwick was one of those little wisps of the ardent, intense, furious New England ideal, which put the spark to dormant patriotism and humanitarianism all over the country. She was quiet and simple, but she was overwhelmingly earnest. The burning energy of her convictions flamed out of her eyes, her speech, her manner. She wanted the whole world made

over, and just according to her pattern. She was enthusiastic for what were then considered advanced ideas in religion, she worked persistently for the emancipation of women, above all she gave her life to the abolition of slavery. She was a bit of idealism incarnate. Those little New England women set the determined might of their fragile shoulders against the dead weight of the old world, and there were times when they seemed to stir it a little. But the old world is grim, harsh, ugly, above all indifferent, and even the tremendous zest of a woman's shoulder cannot drive it out of the way for long.

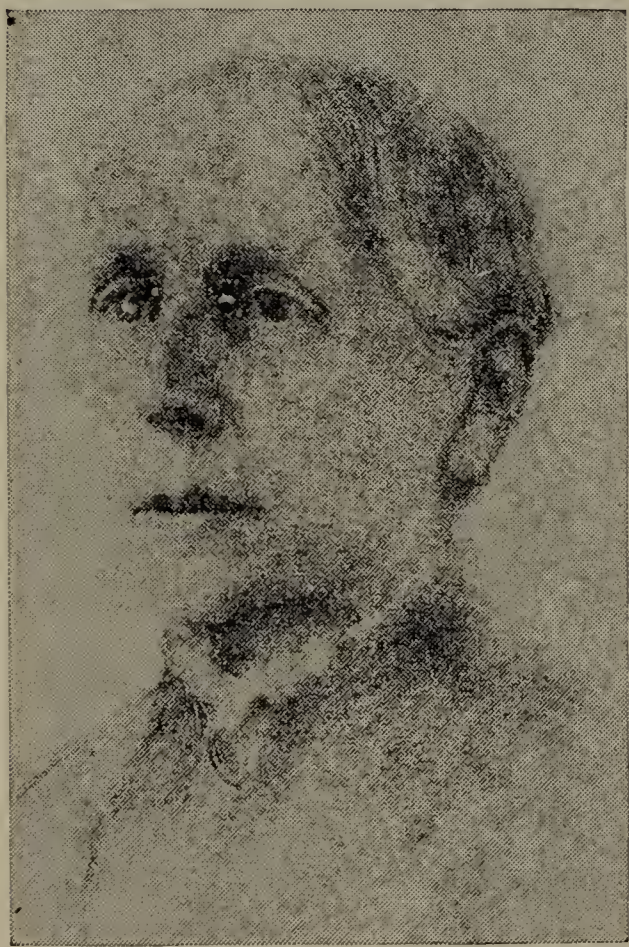
Mrs. Beatrice Codwise died only three years ago, at the advanced age of ninety-four, but she had so long ceased to be actively connected with Wellesley that few of the present inhabitants now remember her. Mrs.



MRS. BEATRICE CODWISE

Codwise was as different as possible from Miss Southwick. They were equally positive in their opinions and

equally positive in the expression of them but the opinions were of very different orders. Mrs. Codwise took little interest in Causes with a big C, unless Missions may be accounted such, and she was very little interested in advanced ideas, but she had a profound and unfailing affection for individual human beings. In her Swiss birthplace she had been brought up in the strictest Calvinism and she clung to every tenet of it with a wholesome and



MISS REBECCA EATON

aggressive vigor that was refreshing in an age of half convictions and colorless creeds. She was quite certain that those who believed as she did would go to heaven and those who did not would go to hell, and she had no reluctance about expressing this view. But while awaiting such a cheerful consummation, she wanted to be happy herself, she wanted those about her to be happy, and she did everything in her power to make them so. She had a magnificent physique,

and could dance till morning without fatigue. She was indefatigable in devising dramatics, parties, and picnics for her children and their friends and no one was more thoughtful of birthdays and other anniversaries of all sorts. She expressed her habit in this matter in one of her pretty little French proverbs: "Les petits cadeaux entretiennent l'amitié, les plus grands l'augmentent," "little

gifts nourish friendship, greater augment it." Up to her very last years she was constantly knitting warm and comfortable shawls and many of her friends, even mere acquaintances, wore these pleasant reminders of her affectionate devotion.

Miss Rebecca Eaton was as different from Mrs. Codwise as from Miss Southwick. She had indeed something of Miss Southwick's interest in the general aspects of emancipation, but her main concern and effort were with the things immediately about her. She was tall, dignified, and quiet, deliberate and determined. She was not a conspicuous talker, but everything she said was to the point. Above all, she had a steady, magnificent persistence, so that in the end what she set out to do was done. Her supreme object in life was to create, sustain, and develop the Grantville Unitarian Church, and she was tireless in working herself and in making others work to effect that object. If the Unitarian Church is a flourishing and successful institution today, Miss Rebecca Eaton should always be remembered as prominently instrumental in making it so. Those who esteem and admire our distinguished fellow-townsmen, Mr. Isaac Sprague, will see in him some of the excellent qualities of the aunt who largely brought him up.

The mention of Miss Eaton and the Unitarian Church naturally suggests the churches in general. In 1867, so far as I am informed, there were only two churches within the limits of West Needham, the Congregational Church in Wellesley proper and the Congregational Church in Grantville. Within a few years following a portion of the Grantville congregation departed to form the Unitarian Church, which for many years held its services in what had been the little Maugus Hall, familiarly known as "The Chapel," and standing on the site of the present Unitarian Church building. St. John's

Catholic Church at the Falls was also started in the early seventies.

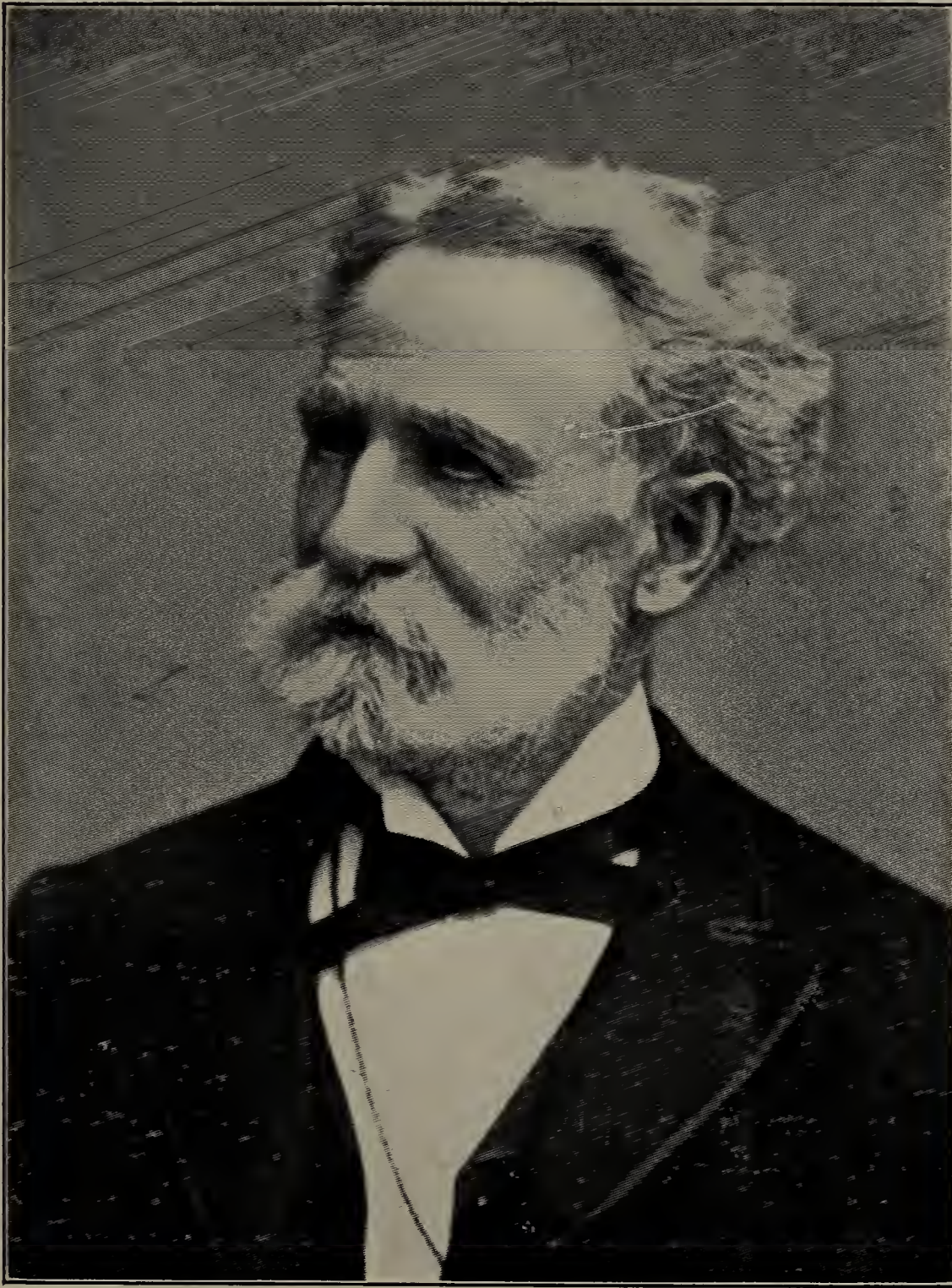
There were several congregational ministers in my childhood whom I do not very distinctly remember. But from 1876 for nearly twenty years the pulpit was filled by the Reverend Jonathan Edwards, and Mr. Edwards



THE CHAPEL

was too marked a figure to be forgotten by any one who had ever seen him. He had a remarkably dignified and handsome presence, bright brown eyes, an abundance of white hair and beard, and an imposing yet gracious and kindly manner. He was a good speaker, both in the pul-

pit and out of it, and he was ready to take an interested though tactful part in public affairs, especially in general



REV. JONATHAN EDWARDS

politics. His family were as widely active and popular as he was, and it is sad that people once so beloved as the

Edwardses should be hardly remembered by any of the present inhabitants of Wellesley.

Reverend A. B. Vorse had a pastorate in the Unitarian Church even longer than Mr. Edwards's. Mr. Vorse was a man of a different type. He was quiet, reserved, and seemed almost shy. He was not an especially brilliant preacher. But there was an atmosphere of peculiar, intimate, utterly unpretentious sanctity about him, which impressed even a childhood so indifferent and so erratic as mine.

The mention of the churches naturally suggests the schools and it seems worth while to enlarge a little on this topic because the education of that day was in many respects so different from the education of this. The methods employed in the schools of 1875 would be regarded by both teachers and pupils of 1925 with some amusement and some contempt; yet they cannot have been wholly inadequate if they produced such graduates as Professor Katharine Lee Bates and Professor Marshall L. Perrin.

The organization of the school system was naturally much more primitive than at present. The first West Needham High School was, I believe, held in what was then Maugus Hall, Grantville, but it was soon transferred to the new building on the site where the Hunnewell School now stands and later to the Shaw Building in Grantville. The eight lower grades were divided into grammar and primary. There were two grammar schools, one at Wellesley, and one close to the present North School. The four lower grades were grouped in the primary, but the classification was much looser and more unsystematic than at present. There was one of these schools at Wellesley proper, one in Grantville, and one at the North.

The course of study was much more confined and

elementary than at present. In the High School a fair variety of subjects was taught, probably enough to get



MARSHALL L. PERRIN

a bright pupil into college, Greek, Latin, French, German, English, History, mathematics. But as all these subjects and all the classes in them were handled by one

teacher, the results were perhaps more notable for variety than for thoroughness. In the lower schools there were none of the many accessories that are supplied at present, no nature-study, no drawing, no systematic music, no gymnastics. The instruction was pretty much confined to a dull and steady drill in arithmetic, reading, spelling, geography, and American history, but if you cared to, you could learn these subjects to the bottom.

There was none of the public assistance that is supplied to all pupils now. Not a single book was paid for by the town, unless a few general works of reference. No paper was furnished or pencils, and the ciphering was largely done on the clumsy but serviceable slate, which has now entirely disappeared. All your supplies you paid for yourself, getting the money as best you could. Then your books belonged to you for life and were a treasured possession, often the only books in a household not richly provided with intellectual resources. You did not fling your books about and abuse them, as scholars do now: you could not afford to.

There was no thought of public transportation. No matter how far from school you lived, you walked, unless your parents could drive you or you could beg a ride from some obliging farmer. And walking, especially in winter, was far more laborious than today. In the absence of sidewalks, you had to follow the snow-plough path in the middle of the street. To be sure, the middle of the street was somewhat safer than at present, and the services of a traffic officer were not required to adjust the pace of the ancient horses and buggies that rambled up and down the narrow highway.

I remember so well for two winters trudging twice a day, day after day, through the snow-drifts that piled up on the "plain," as we used to call the region where Croton, Elm, and Pine Streets are now, but where at that

time there was hardly a single house. The north wind swept across those wide open spaces bitterly. One or two trivial features of that daily walk are worth mention because they have so utterly disappeared from the childhood of the present day. In the autumn we used to look eagerly for the signs of approaching winter in the great cart-loads of sleighs, many-colored, red, blue, green, and yellow, that were transported through the



VIEW OF GRANTVILLE FROM MAUGUS HILL

streets from the factory somewhere up country. The sleigh, like the horse, comes so near to being an extinct animal at present that young people can hardly imagine the delight that sleigh-riding used to be. Another curious spectacle was the passage through the streets of huge droves of cattle, on their way to the slaughter-house at Brighton. I suppose these passed at all times of year, but I chiefly remember them in mid-winter, because at that time the streets were narrowed by impending snow-banks, and to meet one of those disorderly hordes of

wild-looking creatures, and to have to get by them somehow, was a nerve-racking experience for an anxious and timid child. I used to dread them every winter morning when I started for school, and for all I know used to dream of them at night.

In those days, as today, the heart of the school system was the teachers, and as I look back, it seems to me that the teachers then, as now, were one of the most loyal, devoted, faithful, much enduring classes in the community. We do not half enough appreciate what we owe to the grade-teachers: they have the making of America in their hands, and they give their very best. The teachers of fifty years ago had some advantages. For instance, they kept their pupils for a number of years and got thoroughly acquainted with all their peculiarities, instead of passing them on to some one else just as they were beginning to know them. There were disadvantages also. With very little training themselves, the teachers were expected to teach a considerable variety of subjects. A more serious drawback still was the chaotic condition of the grading, if it can be called such. In every primary school, with the younger children, there were a number of overgrown boys, dull, indifferent, and mischievous. To keep these under any sort of discipline was a heavy burden for a delicate young girl, often not out of her teens, but she had to meet it or give up altogether.

Sometimes it was indispensable to call upon outside aid. When my father was chairman of the school committee, one such case came up. My father was a person of direct and energetic methods. He bought himself a stout cowhide whip, went to the school, took the boy out into the coat-room, and thrashed him thoroughly. Of course such a procedure was quite illegal even in those days. The indignant parents dragged my father into court, and a lenient and sympathetic judge let him off

with a five dollar fine. My father said the satisfaction was worth a good deal more than that. Mr. Fiske, who succeeded my father, was more tactful and ingenious in his methods. He told me how he dealt with a similar case. He went to the school and planted himself solidly in the open doorway. Then he said to the refractory boy, "Harry, go up to Miss Cameron and let her give you the whipping you deserve." Harry looked mutinous and sullen. "I hoped," said Mr. Fiske, "that he would make a plunge to get past me and out the door. If he had laid a single finger on me, I should have been entirely justified in giving him a thrashing he would have remembered for life." Harry's courage gave out. He walked up quietly and took his whipping. The next day he disappeared from school and from town.

But it was not often possible to call in the assistance of the School Committee. The teacher had to fight her own battles and terrific battles they sometimes were, or seem, as one looks back at them. There were three or four boys who were born to make trouble, and about once in so often they made it. It was "Charlie, do this!" Charlie did not feel like it and did not budge. The command was repeated with the same result. Then the teacher took her stout ruler and stepped down from the platform. "Charlie, come out into the floor!" Perhaps Charlie came out, or he may have had to be dealt with in his seat. If he came out, the teacher placed herself in front of him. "Hold out your hand!" He held it out. The teacher struck, but the hand was withdrawn before she reached it. She tried it again, and again. Then she lost patience, seized Charlie by the collar, and belabored him where she could, hands, arms, legs, back, head, it made little difference, Charlie all the time squirming, struggling, kicking, with a few scratches and bites thrown in. The two surged across the school-room floor, in furious contest, while the rest of us looked on with

much the same awed fascination that we should have bestowed upon a prize-fight. I suppose the more stolid found it simply amusing; but to sensitive nerves and anxious temperaments there was an abnormal thrill, an unwholesome excitement about it, which could not have been beneficial in developing adolescence. In any case, the performance is worth mention, because it would be so utterly impossible now.

Some other more general incidents of my childhood are perhaps also worth mentioning as illustrating the different conditions in those days. The fundamental human interests and passions were the same fifty or five thousand years ago, but the manifestation of them varies with the change in external circumstances and surroundings.

In 1875 we had not the agencies of speed which mean so much to young people today. We had no automobiles, we had no motor-bicycles, we had not even the ordinary bicycle. There were no trolleys, nor any sort of public conveyance within the limits of Wellesley except the railroad. If you wanted to get anywhere, you walked, unless you were fortunate enough to possess that antediluvian animal, the horse.

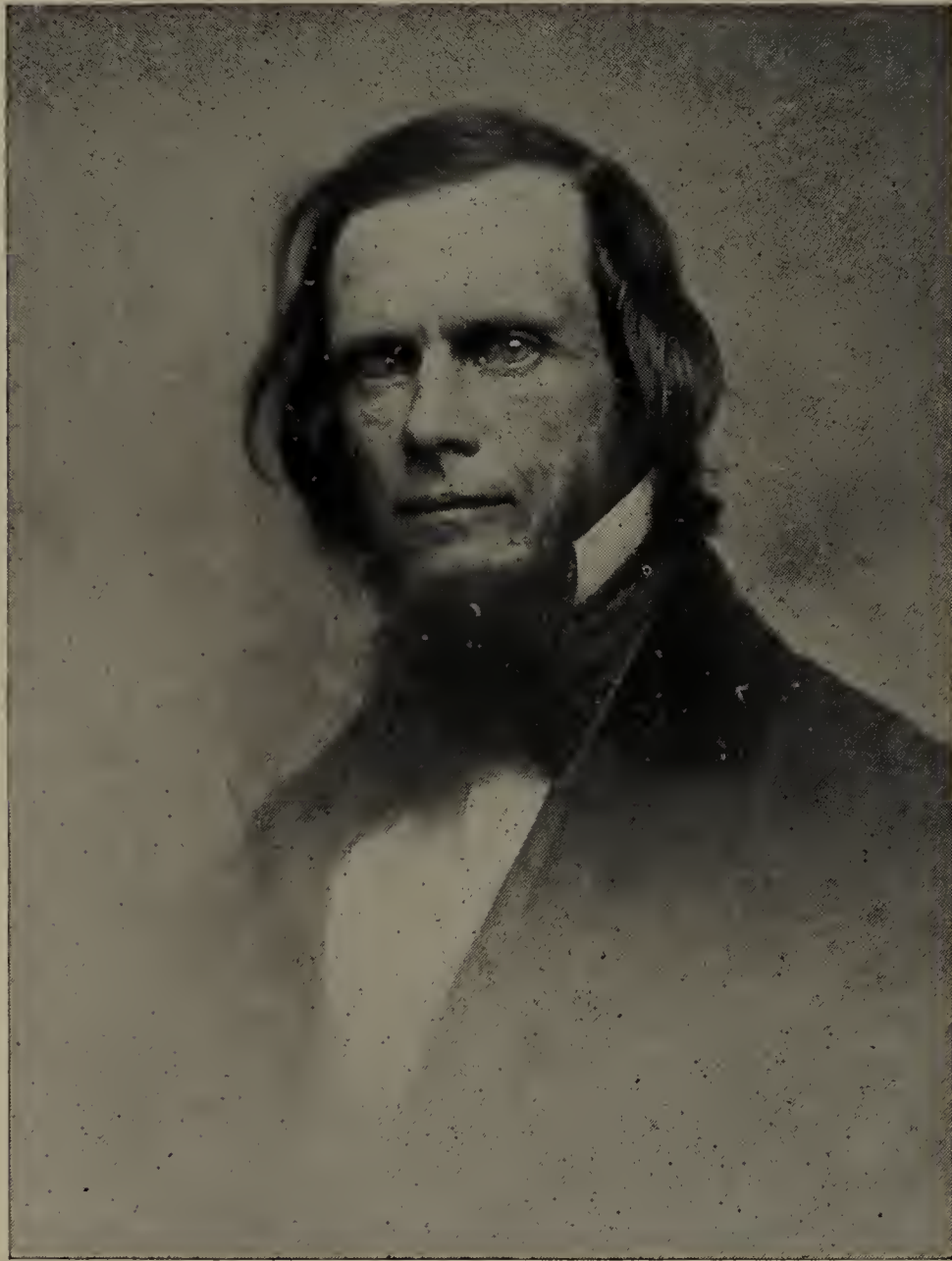
There were no radios, to help get rid of the long winter evenings and to provide an excuse for neglecting home studies, though in those days we did little studying at home: all we had to learn could be learned in school while the lone teacher was busy hearing others recite. There were no telephones. If you wanted to make a date with a girl, you could not call her up and arrange it. You had to trudge perhaps a mile and then find that she had gone out with another fellow. I remember when the telephone first came into practical use, the late Mr. A. R. Clapp gave a telephone-party at his house, and we were allowed to talk for a minute or so with a neighbor some two or three hundred yards up the street. It seemed

more wonderful than talking to London now. Few persons believed that such an instrument could ever be employed for ordinary daily purposes.

As regards sports and games, also, we were much more limited than the young people of today. Golf did not appear at all till much later. Tennis came in when I was about twenty. No one played it in my childhood. Football, somewhat like the present game, was beginning to be played in the colleges and larger towns, but it had not penetrated to Grantville. Baseball we played very much as it is played today. The chief difference was that there were no gloves, and catching a long fly or a hot liner with bare hands was a very different feat from what it is now. The pitching was at first confined to a straight-arm underhand and it was amazing what speed a skilled pitcher could get in that way. Later an underhand throw came in and was soon succeeded by the present freedom of action in every respect. Also, it must be remembered that the catcher had no mask or equipment of any kind. To catch close to the bat under such circumstances was a dangerous business, and so many accidents resulted that it finally became necessary to devise protection. The first rudiment of it was a thick piece of rubber held between the teeth, to protect those useful appurtenances from a sudden or violent blow.

Of the simple and more natural sports we had of course what all country boys have had for generations, fishing, swimming, boating, skating. The great drawback of Wellesley Hills in this regard has always been the lack of any considerable sheet of water. Now that communication is so easy, it is a simple matter to reach Lake Waban or the River or ponds at a much greater distance. But when you had to walk a mile and a half before you got your fishing or skating, it required some consideration. We swam mainly in Longfellow's Pond, and to swim across it for the first time seemed an enor-

mous triumph. As I look at it now and realize that I can throw a stone across it, it seems less of a feat, and I recall the story of Henry Clay, who used to boast of a similar performance in later life. When he returned and



ISAAC SPRAGUE

saw the place, he sighed, and murmured: "Is that all? And to think that all our triumphs and achievements amount to little more!" We skated largely on the flooded swamps in different parts of the village and the pleasure

of sweeping and flying through the solitary woods on starlit or moonlit winter nights will never be forgotten.

In the spring months we used to wander day after day through the woods in quest of birds' eggs, for our "collections," as we called them. It was not a very humane amusement, but it kept us out of doors and it was not uninstrusive. We flitted from one wood to another, from one meadow to another. Then there came a shout of "nest!" followed instantly by the cry, "second egg!" "third egg!" etc., the first being always awarded to the discoverer. We were scrupulous to leave one egg undisturbed, on the theory that birds could not count and therefore would not know the difference. Apparently we did not realize that though these attractive feathered creatures may not be able to enumerate in English or any other language, they are probably quite well aware of the difference between one egg and four.

My own wood wanderings were greatly enriched by my intimate friendship with Isaac and Marvin Sprague. Their father, Mr. Isaac Sprague, was a very charming, but a very shy and retiring person. He was not only an artist of exquisite ability in his drawing of birds and flowers, but a skilled naturalist, who had accompanied Audubon in some of his western expeditions. The sons learned a good deal of a scientific nature from their father and they imparted to me as much of this as my indolent and impatient temperament was capable of absorbing. Our marauding rambles thus acquired more of an educational tincture than was the case with some others. Isaac Sprague was also an enthusiastic collector of butterflies and other insects, but this was beyond my reach.

Our social amusements of fifty years ago were again interestingly different from those of today in some respects. We had no movies. The dramatic entertainments and all other kinds, of Boston, seemed far removed from

us, since transportation was slow and expensive. The chief public diversion, not only in Grantville, but all over the country, was the lecture, and in many cases it was a very dreary diversion indeed. To be sure, men of great intellectual power made a business of it, men like Emerson, Thoreau, Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, Dr. Hale, and others. But in Grantville at any rate we did not often get these great lights. I remember when I was perhaps ten years old hearing Phillips roll out the sonorous periods of his "Daniel O'Connell" in the old Unitarian Chapel course. Sometimes we had a humorous reader or a teller of funny stories. But for the most part my recollection is of a long hour on hard seats under a deluge of smothering dullness, which was preferable only to staying at home and going to bed. Bed seems much more attractive now.

Then there were the Church sociables, which were mainly given over to the young people for a riot of the ancient games, Clap-in-and-clap-out, Post-office, French blindman's buff, Magical music, Drop-the-handkerchief, some of which are quite forgotten, while others are occasionally revived. They were not very exciting in themselves, but they served to keep the boys and girls together and they afforded a pleasant excuse for walking home with a girl under the winter stars.

And there was the Grantville Literary Association, which met in the Congregational vestry and for a number of years, under the conduct of such clever and agreeable persons as Mr. and Mrs. George H. Howison, Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Ames, and numerous others, afforded entertainment that was always varied and even sometimes entertaining.

After the Shaw School was built, in 1875, Shaw Hall, at the top of the building, might perhaps be regarded as the social centre of the village, until the various clubs began to be established. Here dancing parties and card

parties were constantly held, also various meetings of a semi-social, semi-public order. And the equipment of a stage, primitive enough in comparison with present ideas, but then appearing quite luxurious, gave occasion to dramatic performances of greater or less excellence. Those given by the Grantville Dramatic Club were usually of exceptional merit. The Club had some good actors and several very remarkable singers, and under the musical direction of Mr. Daniel Pratt, who was a good leader and a still better trainer, Miss May, Mrs. Miles, Mr. Rice, Mr. Travis, Dr. Hazelton, and others, with a capable chorus, gave the popular Gilbert and Sullivan operettas in a fashion that attracted much comment.

In the spring of 1881 West Needham became the Town of Wellesley and about the same time Grantville became Wellesley Hills. During this exciting period and for some years after, Shaw Hall was a political as well as a social centre, and the town meetings were held there until Mr. Hunnewell's generosity provided the present Town Hall.

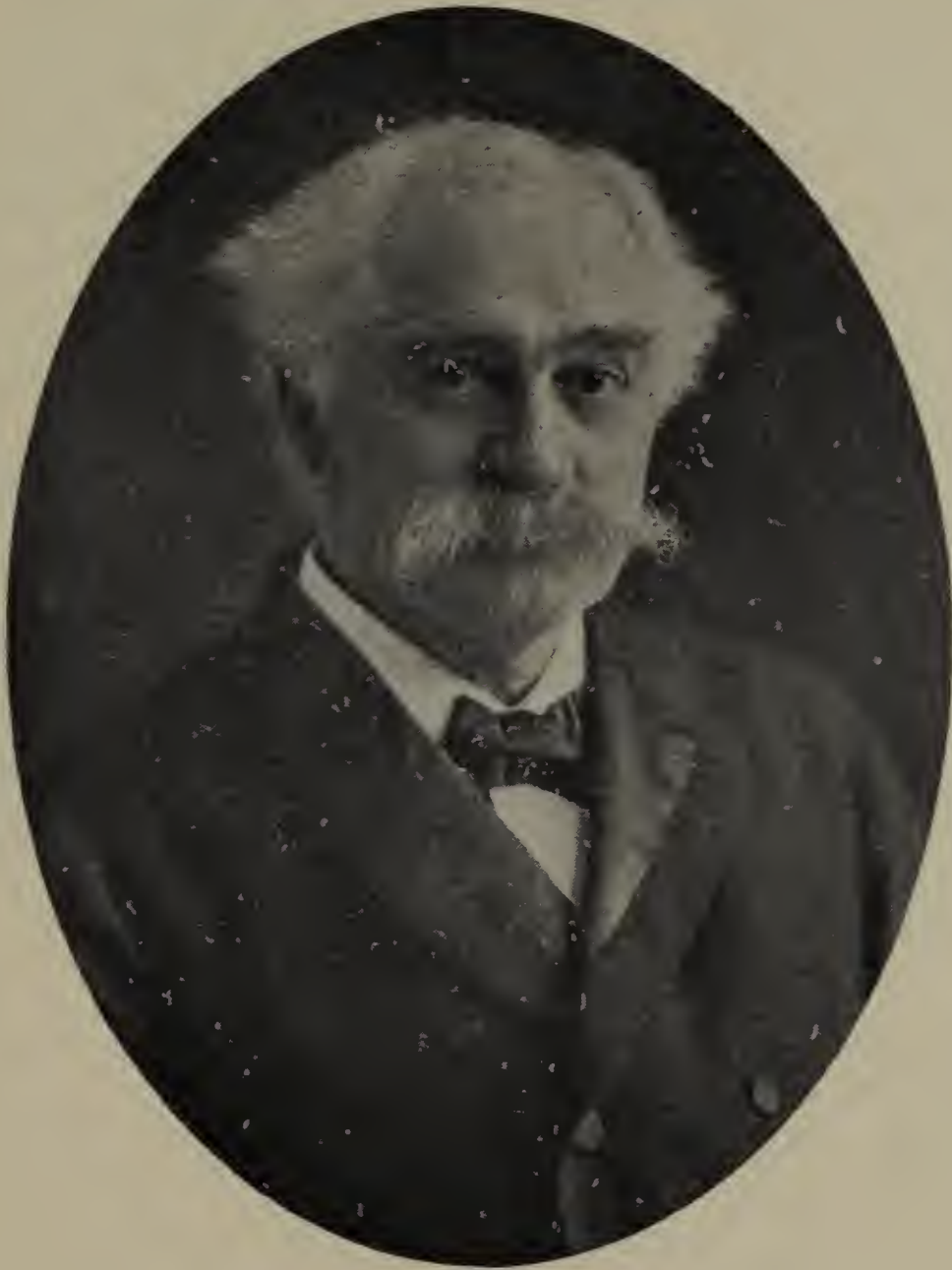
The critical town meeting which decided the separation was of course held in the old Needham Town Hall, in what was then the Town Farm, and is now the Country Club. Not being a voter, I was not present on the occasion, but from what I have heard I know that it was a very lively and tumultuous affair. The gist of the matter was that Wellesley had the money and Needham had the votes and was disposed to use them to maintain the existing status. It required a good deal of ingenious political manoeuvring and perhaps some rather dark intrigue to enable the money to triumph, as it usually does in the end. By an arrangement which I never quite understood, my father was chosen moderator. He was an excellent speaker and an eager and enthusiastic advocate, but he was too ardent and especially too contemptuous of red tape and formal conventions to make a good

presiding officer. I once asked Mr. Fiske why in the world they did not make him moderator as usual. He explained that they felt it was more important to have his advice and assistance on the floor. Perhaps it was. At any rate, the desired result was obtained, and the Town of Wellesley permanently established.

Three figures stand out in my memory as especially important during these years, at any rate in the Wellesley Hills section of the Town. Mr. Lyman K. Putney was a splendid specimen of a thoroughly self-made man, who had forced his way to fortune and success against all sorts of obstacles by persistence, energy, and thrift. He was quiet, patient, never indulged in rhetoric or flowery speech. But he knew what he wanted, knew how to get it, and got it. As he had had to make his own future by discipline and self-denial, he was perhaps a little impatient with those who were not so richly endowed with these excellent qualities. He once said to me of a certain young neighbor, who was advocating excessive town-expenditure, "Pooh! What does he know about the value of money? I suppose he never made a dollar in his life." I am afraid he included me in much the same category; but I always found Mr. Putney a singularly simple, straightforward, direct, and hardheaded man.

One of the ablest men that Wellesley ever produced was Mr. Joseph E. Fiske. As it was, he made himself a considerable reputation in State politics, and this would have been much greater, if he had not been hampered by the ill-health resulting from fatigue and exposure in his Civil War service. Mr. Fiske had a keen sense of the ridiculous and a sharp and caustic tongue. Dull and literal-minded people were somewhat afraid of him and had reason to be. But I always felt that underneath he was thoroughly kind and even that he had a somewhat exceptional sensibility which forced him to the appearance

of the other extreme to guard against it. He served Needham and Wellesley in many public offices for many years. But I think his most notable service was as Moderator of the Town Meetings, and I have hardly ever seen

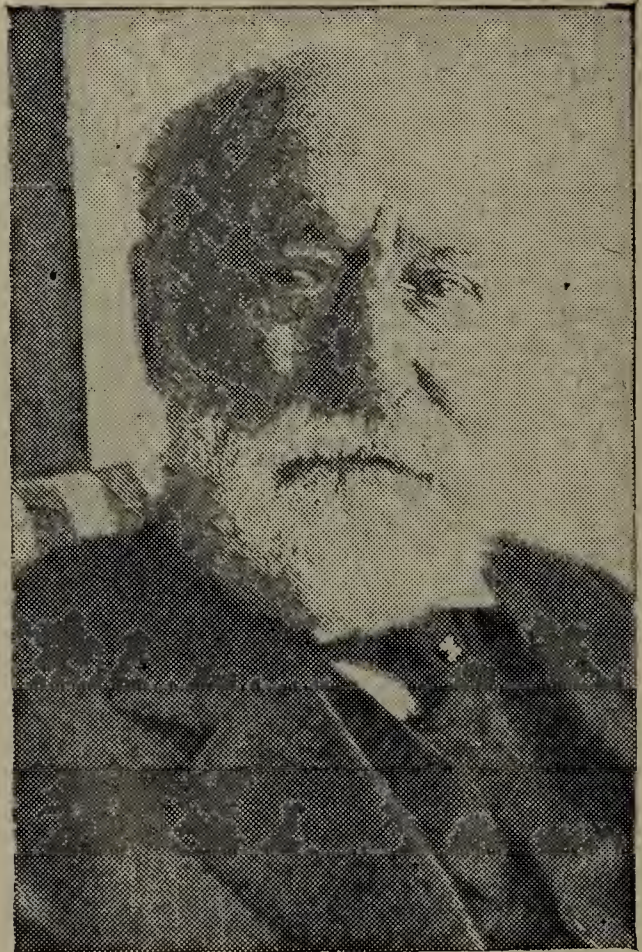


HON. JOSEPH E. FISKE

a presiding officer who surpassed him. He knew every detail of the technique, but he was always ready to override it when circumstances demanded. His supreme merit was his quickness: you could not take him at a disadvantage, or puzzle him, or confuse him, though he was a

master of confusing others, when he thought it desirable. Above all, he was expert in despatching business. He could get work done without slighting anything or anybody. Wellesley has had many good moderators, but not one who could get through a long warrant so effectively or completely or successfully as Joseph E. Fiske.

Mr. Albion R. Clapp left us a few weeks ago and he was well known to many present residents, but he long since ceased to take an active part in Town affairs. In the early days, however, he was a most prominent and useful worker. He



ALBION R. CLAPP

not only developed his own extensive real es-

tate holdings with far-seeing judgment and systematic thoroughness, but was instrumental in some of the improvements that most advanced the well-being of the community as a whole. The introduction of the water system and of the gas supply and the establishment of the trolleys perhaps did more for progress in Wellesley than anything else, and Mr. Clapp's agency was an effective factor in all these. Undoubtedly his kindly genial ingratiating manner was a great help to him in accomplishing his practical purposes.

With the separation of Wellesley from Needham I bring these rambling recollections to a close. After that

separation the suburban development of the Town was much more rapid and with some drawbacks had great elements of gain. But the founding of the various clubs, the building of the churches, the remarkable progress of the school system and other public institutions, and the characters of the notable men and women who took part in all these things can be better described by those who were more actively concerned than I could be.

I am aware that my wandering story must have some errors and misstatements and I know that I have omitted many things and persons that will seem important to others but perhaps did not come quite so close to me. My chief object has been to bring out the contrast between the Wellesley of today and the Grantville of fifty years ago. Yet, after all, the charm and attraction of the Town remain the same. There are the same hills, the same woods, the same fields, the same waters. The birds sing merrily or madly in the green splendor of June. The violets bloom in the spring, the golden-rod in summer, the asters in autumn. By a walk of fifteen minutes you can plunge into woodland solitude and silence where no automobile shrieks at you and you are not protected and humiliated by a traffic officer's benevolent patronage. For one, like myself, to whom life is all behind and not before, the charm of these woodland walks lies largely in association. Every touch of natural beauty is intertwined and mingled with the memory of childhood hopes and loves, of vanished faces that can never be forgotten, of quick and eager steps that often led nowhere, but led with a

speed and glory that steps of mine can never know again.
In the lovely words of the old poet,

“Scenes that soothed
Or charmed me young, no longer young I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.”



WELLESLEY SQUARE ABOUT 1880

